

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 020630Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9458
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMCONSUL MUNICH

UNCLAS WARSAW 5334

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PL
SUBJ: POLISH PRESS COMMENTARY ON AMNESTY

REF: WARSAW 5115

1. MICHAL STRUCZYNSKI, WRITING IN TRYBUNA LUDU OF AUGUST 1, REPORTS THAT THE PUBLIC SHOWED "UNDERSTANDING AND APPROVAL" FOR THE AMNESTY ANNOUNCED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON JULY 19. HE SAYS MANY READERS COMPLAINED THAT DETAILS ABOUT THE AMNESTY WERE INCOMPLETELY REPORTED. STRUCZYNSKI MAKES THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) AMNESTY HAS ALWAYS PLAYED A ROLE IN PEOPLE'S POLAND. THE AMNESTIES OF 1945, 1947, AND 1956 HAD A POLITICAL CHARACTER. THEY WERE DESIGNED TO REINTEGRATE FORMER ENEMIES OF THE POST-WAR POLITICAL SYSTEM. WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF POLITICAL DIVISIONS
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IN POLAND, THE AMNESTIES OF 1969, 1974, AND 1977 TOOK ON THE HUMANITARIAN GOAL OF SOCIAL REDEMPTION FOR CRIMINAL OFFENDERS.

(B) EXPERIENCE WITH PREVIOUS AMNESTIES SHOWS THEY ARE EFFECTIVE; ONLY 11 PERCENT OF THE 35,000 PRISONERS FREED IN 1974 RETURNED TO JAIL. AT THE TIME OF THE AMNESTY OF JULY, 1977, THERE WERE 30,000 FEWER PRISONERS IN JAIL THAN IN 1974. AT THE SAME TIME,

EXPERIENCE SHOWS THE ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING PRE-CONDITIONS FOR AMNESTY. THESE MAKE INCLUDE REQUIRING THAT NEWLY AMNESTIED PEOPLE TAKE UP STEADY JOBS, PAY AT LEAST A PORTION OF THEIR FINES, AND AVOID THE COMPANY OF "CRIMINAL CIRCLES".

2. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD POLES CRITICIZE THE AMNESTY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS A CHEAP WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF OVER-CROWDED PRISONS. ONE POLE COMPLAINED THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE RELEASING HARDENED CRIMINALS WHO WOULD SUCCEED IN ROBBING HONEST PEOPLE BEFORE THEY WERE RETURNED TO PRISON. STRUCZYNSKI'S COMMENTS ARE AIMED AT SUCH CRITICISMS, AS WELL AS AT POLITICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AMNESTY. THIS IS MADE CLEAR IN HIS ASSERTION THAT "FOR YEARS, NO ONE HAS BEEN CONDEMNED FOR BEING AN IDEOLOGICAL OR POLITICAL ENEMY OF SOCIALISM." END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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NNN

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